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This special report was prepared for INDEXA at the conclusion of my DXpedition

Pacific 2009 Ultra Light Solo DXpedition 3D2GM, T30GM and T2G

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Introduction

I have been operating from a number of places in Africa and Asia with great fun and loved to travel to all those places. But for many years I had a great interest in the Pacific with so many tiny islands laying great distances apart. With DXpeditions visiting the Pacific, it is nice to work them, but also to look up where they actually are, to learn what difficulties they encounter when going to very remote places and to read the stories after their return. With Google Earth it is now even more interesting as you can zoom into the small atolls and even see if there are houses or other constructions.

Highlights

- Activation of 3 DXCC entities
3D2GM
T30GM
T2G
- Total of 13,000 QSO's
- 45 KG of luggage
- Traveled 46,672 km
- Cost per QSO € 0.35

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Early 2009 I started exploring the possibilities of a trip to the Pacific. First thing to find out is how you best get into the Pacific with the airline of your choice or which airline best serves this purpose. For me KLM AirFrance is the obvious choice and it could bring me to Tahiti – Papeetee in the eastern part of the Pacific or Tokyo, Seoul or Sidney or Wellington in the western edge of the Pacific.

My first choice was to explore the islands in French Polynesia that were high enough on the

most wanted list. I have looked at the Marquesas group which are beautiful islands, interesting culture and history and with enough demand from DXers. Next was to learn how you get to those places from Papeetee and where to stay. There are various travel options to visit one or more islands in this group but finding a suitable accommodation was more difficult. From experience I know that having a vertical on the beach side works quite well and using a vertical for this operation was the best fit in my strategy to reduce weight as much as



Elecraft K3 with switching power supply and home made T-Match

possible. As most of these island consist of high mountains, the accommodation should be somewhere on the north side of the island. This leaves only a few places suitable for the operation. French Polynesia is known for the luxurious and expensive hotels and resorts. Money wise this was not my first choice so I looked only for the more basic type resorts or guesthouses. You can certainly find this type of accommodation but another problem appeared. Most of the smaller resorts and hotels at the small islands have very limited availability of electricity. It is quite common that they run their own generator just a few hours per day. Although I found some very interesting places, the lack of 24 hours of electricity reduced the choice again.

After Polynesia I started to explore the situation in Melanesia. First I checked airline routes and this showed that any plan relies heavily on time tables and connections. After discovering that interesting connections were not in operation anymore, or airports closed, I finally found that AirPacific had a good connection between Sidney and Fiji and from Fiji I could get a connection to Tuvalu and Kiribati. As both countries consisted of small atolls with accommodation very close to the beach, the

For Fiji you also have an application form and together with a copy of your home license, specs of the radio equipment and a certificate of good conduct, you send it together with the application fee by mail to the telecom authorities in Suva, Fiji.

In my case I transferred the money to Kiribati but apparently the banks messed it up and after tracing via my bank, I got proof of payment and with this they could locate the money in Kiribati. Unfortunately this took a long time but had very good support from the Telecom Authorities officer.

For Fiji I had a similar problem as my application with application fee did not arrive, although it was sent registered. After many weeks it was found and the process could start. A few weeks before my departure I contact Fiji again as I needed the license but also the temporary import permission for the equipment. Fortunately, the import permission was issues two weeks before departure, but still no sign of the license/call sign.

In the meantime I contacted other amateurs who had been there to ask for advice on accommodation, antenna situations, etc. I

Day	Friday	Sunday	Tuesday	Tuesday	Thursday	Thursday	Sunday
Sept.	4	6	8	15	17	24	27
Country	Netherlands	Fiji	Tarawa	Fiji	Tuvalu	Fiji	Netherlands

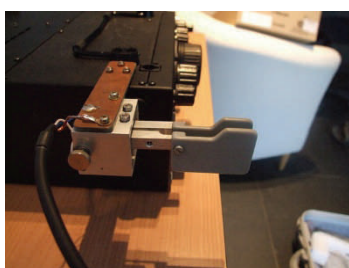
The final flight schedule

choice was made. Both Tuvalu (T2) and Tarawa (T30) were high enough on the wanted list to be considered interesting for the radio community.

After checking on the license application process, I learned that you should start 3 months in advance to be sure having the permission secured. So when I had decided that my travel should take place during September, I started the license application in May. An interesting thing was that for the three countries I wanted to apply for a license all have completely different rules, fees and timelines. For Tuvalu you cross the arrival hall at the airport and walk into the telecom building where you apply and get your license at the spot. For Kiribati there is an application form which you need to submit together with some other documents. This can be done via e-mail. After you transfer the AUD 100 license fee, you get the license by e-mail in return.

checked on available hotels and guesthouses and used Google Earth to explore the location for antennas at the various hotels. That this exercise can be very useful was clearly proven when I went to Pula Sibu in Malaysia. The Rimba Resort had free space to the North North-West which was Europe and US. When actually at the spot I experienced it was indeed a good location. Later I heard from Enno, PF5X that he was also on Pulau Sibu a year before but at the Sea Gypsy resort on the other side of the island. he experienced no signals from Europe as there was a small mountain just north of him. So checking on Google makes sense.

My main target was to visit Tuvalu (T2) and West Kiribati (T30) and wanted to stay for about a week on each island. The only airline connection with both islands was provided by AirPacific, flying from Fiji. So my initial flight was from Amsterdam to Nadi on Fiji. I planned not



An old ETM paddle mounted on a PCB and attached to the K3 that serves as the base plate.

to have the connecting flights too tight to avoid having problems if flights were delayed. At the same time, it gave me the opportunity to operate also from Fiji (3D2). AirPacific is flying only on Tuesdays and Thursdays to both islands so this actually formed the basis of the travel plan.

The next step was to book the accommodation. For Fiji I stayed at the "amateur radio friendly" Club Fiji Resort which is not far from the Nadi international airport and has a chalet very close to the sea. On Tarawa I booked the government owned Otintaai Hotel, and on Funafuti the Hideaway Guesthouse.

As this was a solo DXpedition, I had to take the weight of all the equipment and personal gear seriously into consideration in order not to pay a premium for excess luggage and at the same time allow me to be able to handle all the luggage myself. Moving around with 6 or 8 boxes is not really handy when traveling.

For more than a year I had started a few projects with the aim of reducing the weight of my luggage. The first project was a T-Match tuner that would replace my small MFJ tuner. In this particular case, I wanted to have a tuner with a higher efficiency but it resulted in a tuner which weighed more.. However, I now would have the capability to match a wide range of antenna situations, including balanced feed lines.

For the antenna part, I first wanted to bring a doublet antenna with open feed line but later decided to stick with my ECO R7+ vertical for 40m to 10m. All my accommodations were located directly at the beach and therefore I could locate a vertical antenna very close to the water line. Last year I had made a carrying case for this antenna which was made of cardboard and fitted into a ski-bag which I bought for just 5 Euro. The bag was 207 cm long and 12 by 12 cm square. There was also space for a fiber glass pole and some coax cable. After viewing some web sites and pictures of other DXpeditions I found that in some cases the luggage was loaded in the passenger area of a small plane where space was limited. Realizing that long boxes could cause problems in small planes, I decided to repackage my antenna.

I acquired a large piece of thick cardboard

(packing material for a big fridge) from a retail shop. I cut and folded it so it formed a box that could contain the antenna elements of the R7+ and the DX-Wire fiber glass pole. My wife made a bag of very strong fiber sheet with two handles. Now the box measures 135x16x16 cm. As a side effect, it was also more than a kilo lighter than the tall box.

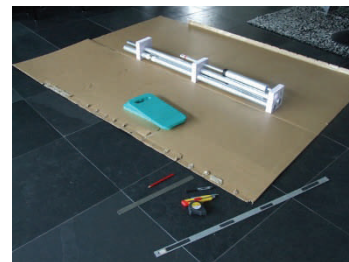
I really like the Bencher paddle because it has a very heavy base plate to avoid moving around on the table. This is very practical at home but not for traveling on airplanes. Therefore I used the paddle of an old ETM keyer mounted on a strip of PCB material which I affixed to the Elecraft K3 radio. During operation, the K3 with power supply are heavy enough to serve as a base for the paddle. This saved me about 1.2 kilo. The paddle will only be used for some occasional messages since during a normal pileup, I will only use the keyboard. Furthermore, having a paddle allows me to use the electronic keyer in the K-3 if my PC fails.

For this trip I also replaced my old Dell laptop with a new mini notebook which was about half the weight of the Dell. This notebook has a 10.2" screen which is good enough for the logging screen of N1MM.

With reduced equipment weight, I still would be overweight and was wondering how I could manage to keep the costs for excess luggage at a minimum. With a suitcase and the antenna box as check-in luggage, I had a trolley (small wheeled suitcase) with the gear (K3, power supply, laptop, photo camera) and a small backpack to hand carry. With the radio in the trolley, I was prepared to answer all kind of questions from customs and security people.

For the first stretch I knew I had no overweight problem but the test was with Air Pacific as they are more strict on overweight. In Sydney I was in transit and two pieces of checked-in luggage were simply re-labeled and forwarded to Fiji; no extra charge. On the way to Kiribati, I had 8 KG overweight and was charged AUD 64 for this. On the return trip from Kiribati, no one ever checked the weight so there was no extra charge.

For Tuvalu I had to first fly to Suva on the other



Preparing the box for the vertical R7+.



The carton ready for folding and gluing.



The carton box ready and the antenna elements hold together by foam blocks.



The R7+ antenna and DX-wire fiber pole in a carrying bag with handles.

end of the Fiji main island, by a domestic flight for which no weight was checked. In Suva, the lady at the counter told me that I could not hand carry the trolley as I would certainly get trouble with security. What could I do? I had to check in three pieces of luggage which resulted in excess

luggage of 19 KG at the price of AUD 152. This was a situation I had not anticipated. But overall I was still below my estimated costs for excess luggage. During the whole trip, I was never asked about the radio in my luggage.

Viti Levu, Fiji



Chalet (room) No.10, at the edge of the resort and some 30 meters from the sea.

As mentioned before, I used Fiji as the central location for the flights to Tarawa (T30) and Funafuti (T2) and using the available time for operating. In practice this meant arriving in the evening, taking some food, installing the antenna on the beach (during darkness), and assembling the radio station after which I could operate a couple of hours. The following day was used for some necessary shopping and operating until 10 PM. After 10 PM I first started to take down the antenna (again during darkness) followed by packing all equipment and personal gear to be ready for an early departure the next day.

Before departing from the Netherlands, I still did not have my license, so it was still to be seen how this would develop. I did have the temporary import permission so I could at least enter Fiji with my equipment. After arrival in the evening I had still no license on hand, so took a

dinner and went to sleep after 30 hours of traveling. The next morning I contacted the license officer in Suva again and fortunately received my call sign. This was the moment to get into action. I started to assemble the vertical antenna but found that one hose clamp was missing (and was still on the workbench at home). I rushed to downtown Nadi to buy three hose clamps from a hardware store. Within about 2 hours everything was up and running and I could start enjoying the pile-ups.

In one of the restaurants of the resort was an internet PC with a very slow connection. It was open from 10 AM till 9 PM and I went there a couple of times to read my e-mail and to update my web site.

Operating details

On **7 September** I started the first pile-up at 04:16Z on 30m. The band was very quiet and nice signals from the US. After about 1.5 hours I moved to 20m where I had a nice pile-up and a good opening to Europe. The next morning I started early to try on 30m and 40m but without results. As I was unable to make QSO's I decided to dismantle the vertical and pack the equipment. This gave me some time to go to the internet cafe next door to read my e-mail and to update my web site after which I went to the Nadi International airport for the flight to Tarawa, Kiribati.

At check-in, I had 8 KG excess luggage for which I had to pay FJD 64. The officer at the security check asked me about the content of the trolley, hand lifted it to check the weight and quickly wished me a good flight. This hurdle was taken and I was ready to enjoy the flight to Tarawa, Kiribati which was actually the first of my two target destinations.



The vertical on the beach at low tide. At high tide the base of the antenna is only 5 meters from the water line.

Tarawa, Western Kiribati

September 8 - I arrived at the Bairiki International Airport where many people were greeting the new arrivals. Tarawa has some 11,000 inhabitants and all international travel is by two flights (Tuesday and Thursday) and a number of vessels. It was no wonder there are so many people at the airport welcoming friends and family. The airport is rather small and I quickly got through customs but got stuck at the baggage claim. After waiting in an extremely hot and humid room in the airport building, the baggage arrived and was pushed through some sort of gate and placed in the middle of the small room. People started searching for their bags and quickly it looked like a nest with ants. I took my time and tried not to move too much in order to keep my body temperature under control. After a while I was able to pick my two cases from the pile and moved outside where it was still warm but a lot more pleasant.

The hotel shuttle took about 15 minutes to deliver all guests to the Otintaa Hotel, the only (government owned) hotel. Tarawa has a number of guesthouses as well.

On advice from several other operators who were there before, I had asked for room 7 which is at the end of the east wing. The location is excellent as you can easily walk into the garden and work on the antennas which can be placed right at the edge of the lagoon.

For my preparation of this trip I received some pictures from JA8BMK of this location which was very helpful. Just because of this, I brought two stainless steel clamps to fix the vertical antenna to one of the poles that keeps the fence in place. It was quite a challenge to get the vertical on top of the tube by myself but I managed to get it done by the use of two guy wires. I needed only 10 meters of coax to reach



The R7+ mounted on a fence at the lagoon.



The fiber pole for the 40m vertical with elevated radials

the radio in the room.

The first contact was made at 15:17Z on 40m. I was surprised by the extremely strong signals and at one point I had to adjust the audio to an acceptable level to protect my ears. I could work Japan, US and Europe at the same time and I soon had a good pileup which became more difficult to work. In some case I recognized that other DX stations started their operation close to my frequency which quickly caused confusion and finally I had to cease operation.

Sometimes I could work the pileup until conditions faded out but sometimes the pileup developed into a chaos where nobody was listening anymore. This was partly caused by the fact that my signal was very weak in Europe but largely by the misbehavior of some people at the other end, which was difficult for me to hear. I had cases where I had to pause for 15 minutes to get the pileup silent and could start with the right procedure again; once I have called a station, I want to finish that QSO, no matter how long it takes, but some callers did not honor my commitment.

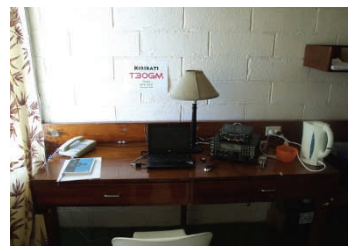
The next day I constructed a 40m vertical for which I brought a 15m tall DX-wire fiber pole. I ran a wire from the top down and connected it to a current balun. This was about 5 meters above ground level. At the balun I connected two elevated radials. With the miniVNA I did some measurements and made the necessary adjustments. I had a good SWR and there was no need for an additional tuner. Although it is difficult to make a good comparison with the R7+, I'm convinced that this 40m vertical improved my signal due to its physical length and its lower radiation angle.

Conditions were quite different day by day and it was a bit frustrating to have fantastic pileups and propagation one day and many hours of dead bands the next day. Nevertheless, there were several fantastic pileups and I was even able to work good pileups on 15m and 12m. One day I started on 15m that looked dead but within minutes I had a huge pileup for a couple of hours. The most useful bands were 40m, 20m and 17m.

Wireless internet access was provided in the restaurant so my tablemate was my laptop.



Bonriki International Airport on Tarawa.



Otintaa Hotel in Bikenibeu.



Traditional meeting center.



Otintaa Hotel in Bikenibeu.



The 40m vertical (left) and R7+ seen from the lagoon side.

The connection was very slow so the first thing was to start downloading my e-mail and then order my food. This way I was able to get some feedback from the e-mails and the DX-cluster and also to answer the mail and update my web site while awaiting my food.

The last day I started early to take down the 40m vertical after which I worked a good pileup on 20m until 10AM when I had to close down the station. I needed to take down the R7+ vertical and pack my equipment because the plane would leave Tarawa at 04:15PM.

Checking in at the airport was again an activity in a small room with extreme high temperature and humidity. All passengers were like sardines in a tin and queuing for the inspection of the suitcases. After this the luggage was placed on a scale but the guy did not read the weight so this time I did not pay for excess luggage. After a while, a mini-van drove over the runway for

inspection and to remove possible obstacles or debris. Later a police officer on a motorbike with siren drove along the runway to alarm the local people that the plane was near and they should leave the runway. Sometime later, the plane arrived, exchanged passengers quickly and headed back to Fiji again. During take-off several people were waiting alongside the runway to wave us goodbye, including the police officer on his bike.



Viti Levu, Fiji

15 September - Arrival at Nadi airport was around 7:30PM. When I arrived at the Club Fiji Resort after dinner, I decided against a night-time antenna installation. Instead I went to bed to get some good rest. The next morning I installed the vertical on the beach which was done quickly as I knew the place for the antenna and the fixing points for guy wires. The rest of the day I spent on the radio and then did some shopping, e-mail and web site maintenance.

Working US and Japan was easy, of course, but fortunately there were also two good openings to Europe. Although my operating time on Fiji was limited, I had the impression that propagation was much better than from Tarawa and QSO's could be made throughout the day and evening. Another observation was the high number of dupes.

In the evening at 10PM I started to take down the antenna again as I had to leave very early the next day. This was an exercise that had to be done very carefully so I would not lose any of the small bolts and nuts in the sand or stumble over the various wires that were on the ground. I also had to be careful that other guests would not stumble over my coax cable when they were passing by my chalet.

The next morning I left early for the trip to Tuvalu which began with a domestic flight from Nadi to Suva. The suitcase and antenna-box were checked in and I could hand carry the trolley and back pack into the plane, which was a two engine turboprop. After arrival in Suva I had to check-in at the "international section" for the flight to Funafuti, Tuvalu



You will have severe injuries when hit by a falling coconut.

Funafuti, Tuvalu

16 September - Although the small size of the Bonikri International Airport on Tarawa was quite an experience, the airport on Funafuti is even smaller and I would consider this the absolute bare minimum space needed to operate an airport. Customs, immigration and luggage collection is all in the same room of just some 25 sqm. After the airplane was parked in front of the arrival hall, we disembarked and followed the usual procedures in a relaxed atmosphere.

However, a custom officer wanted to know what I had in the tall box. Once I mentioned that it was an antenna, he asked for an invoice and started to talk about some sort of import duty. I mentioned that I was going to bring the antenna with me when leaving the country but he was not convinced. He told me to leave the antenna at the airport and come back the next day. I thought that was not a good idea and continued to discuss how to solve the issue. As I had to wait until all departing passenger had boarded the plane, I decided to go the telecom office to collect my license. Perhaps this could help in the discussion with customs.

I met Mr. Anisi Penitusi who is the license issuing officer and with whom I had communicated about the license application. I paid the AUD 50 license fee and got my receipt that also indicated my call sign T2G. The license would be prepared and delivered later in the week. With the receipt in hand, I went back to customs to continue my attempt to get out of customs with my antenna. Finally (after all passengers left the airport) I was allowed to take the antenna with me but had to report at the customs headquarter the next day to talk with "the boss".

After leaving the airport building I found myself alone in the parking lot and had a problem getting a taxi, as there are just only a handful of taxis on the island. After an hour a taxi showed up and was willing to bring me to my guesthouse at Tengako at the northern part of the island, some 15 minutes drive.

After arriving at the guesthouse, I started to get things organized. I positioned a table close to the electrical outlet because there were no extension cords available. The table position was in front of the main entrance door which I always had open for some cooling by the sea breeze. With the absence of the sea breeze it was extremely hot and humid. I went back to

Fongafale, the area around the airport, to rent a motorbike and buy the necessary food and drinks.

I was immediately concerned about the location as the garden was covered with tall coconut and palm trees which was an undesirable situation for my vertical. Also the backyard of the guesthouse was not suitable. Since I had no other choice, I started to assemble the antenna and mounted this on a iron tube of about 1.5m above the ground at an open spot in between the trees.

Although I worked stations from the US, Japan and Europe, signals were not very strong. The next morning I examined the situation in the backyard which ends at the ocean. It was a sloping area with some sort of small dike at the ocean and with trees on top. This was certainly not the right place for the antenna.

The "beach" behind the dike was fully covered with small and big pebble stones and not suitable for installation of the antenna. But I discovered an iron bar sticking out of the surface at the beach side, close to the top of the dike. This was a good place to place the vertical and to guy it with two ropes.

My "good" antenna site was rather far from the guesthouse. I had to figure out if I had enough coax cable to reach this place. With 39 and 24 meters of coax connected together I could just cover the distance. I made sure that the coax was lifted from the surface by trees and branches to avoid being effected by animals such as pigs (the neighbors were farming pigs) or crabs. The joint between the two cables was covered with a plastic bag and kept in the air by a branch to avoid water getting into the joint.

Although the new position of the R7+ was still not ideal, it was certainly better. Later I discovered that at high tide the waves flushed around the base of the antenna and the waves caused a cloud of salty spray over the entire antenna.

After the antenna was installed near the ocean, I had to visit the customs HQ to discuss it with the "boss". This was just a courtesy visit and once I promised that I would take the antenna back with me, the case was cleared.



Funafuti International Airport, the only airport of Tuvalu.



Mr. Anisi Penitusi the license issuing officer at the counter of the telecom building 50 meters away from the airport.



The R7+ mounted on a 2" pipe in the front garden of the guesthouse.



The operating position in the Hideaway Guesthouse.



The 40m vertical in the front garden of the guesthouse.

There were no outstanding issues anymore and I could continue working the pileups. It was more or less the same situation as on Tarawa with all day Japan, often also US and so now and then Europe.

It is common practice that several people are purposefully interfering with the transmit frequency of DX-stations (which again triggers others to respond, and so on...). During one particular operation I discovered someone jamming my listening frequencies and was even moving up and down when discovering my listening frequency. This is the first time I came across this type jamming. As usual, best thing is to just ignore it.

On **September 18** I erected the 40m vertical with elevated radials. I placed it in the middle of the garden in front of the guesthouse. The 15 meter tall pole stood 5 meters above the trees. The remaining 10 meters of coax was connected to this antenna with the feed point at about 5 meters above the ground. Switching antennas was now a matter of disconnecting and reconnecting of coax cables. The 40m vertical worked well and was a good addition to the R7+.

In the guesthouse I had no access to a telephone or internet so it became a practice to take the motorbike and drive to Funafuti to visit an internet cafe. Fortunately, they had a reasonable connection and were very inexpensive. However, such a trip was at least 2x 15minutes driving plus the time in the cafe. Sometimes I combined this also with necessary shopping for food and drinks.

Since the second day on the island, I visited the Vaiaku Lagi Hotel in Funafuti for breakfast or lunch now and then. I learned that they provided air-conditioned rooms with internet access. Besides that, they had an excellent garden between the hotel and the lagoon. This appeared to me as an excellent accommodation but unfortunately they were fully booked till Tuesday. I decided to book the last two days of my stay there as the circumstances looked much better than the guesthouse for a number of reasons (personal conditions, internet, antenna situation).

Tuvalu is a special case when it comes to your personal expenses. All payments are in cash

since you cannot use credit cards. I brought sufficient Australian Dollars with me. However, with the hotel being more than double the price of the guesthouse, it immediately changed my financial situation. Fortunately the extra money I brought covered the extra expenses, but you can imagine my initial concerns.

The daily routine was to first scan the bands for activity. But this was sometimes frustrating because it happened often that I could hear some stations but did not get a reply on my CQ calling. When operating was not possible, I used the time to sleep, exploring the island by motorbike, doing shopping, or visiting the internet cafe for mail, web site maintenance or making calls to the family. But the fact that I could not make QSO's was most frustrating as you can imagine.

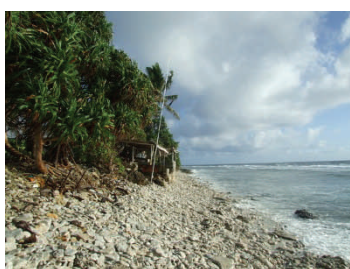
I noticed that with my equipment being exposed to the very humid salty atmosphere on the island, things got rusty very quickly. In just 5 days, some of the hardware of the vertical became very rusty. Even the small screws on the K3 became rusty. During my stay, some engineers were fixing a new antenna and equipment for a new mobile GSM network. During this task they had to dismantle an old Kathrein vertical GSM antenna from a 40m high tower which was just 5 years old. It was completely damaged by the harsh climate. Even the big satellite dishes will not last for more than 5 years.

On **Monday 21st** September I visited the Vaiaku Lagi Hotel to meet the handyman, Henry, to discuss the installation of my antenna. He collected a one meter long 2" steel pipe from his workshop which I could use for placing my R7+ vertical at the edge of the lagoon. He was also available for any help I might need.

The next day I packed all my gear and was ready to move to the hotel. I had arranged a taxi the day before to pick up my suitcase and box but he did not show up. So I took my trolley and drove on the motorbike to the hotel after which I started to search for a taxi. I drove around town for more than an hour and I finally ended up somewhere between houses after many people gave me directions and suggested to ask further on. Actually the driver was sleeping but his mother told him to get up.



Operating in a hot and humid environment with a sea breeze for cooling.



The R7+ relocated to the ocean side.



The base of the antenna was sometimes washed by seawater at high tide.

I gave him instructions to pick up my gear from the guesthouse. About 40 minutes later he appeared at the hotel with the remainder of my stuff.

I installed the R7+ again, but this time at the lagoon side, straight in front of my room. The steel pipe was placed in the water (at high tide) and the antenna fixed on top of it. Two guy wires kept the antenna in position. As soon as I had installed the radio, I started to operate. The new accommodation was a real pleasure and having internet 24 hrs a day was a good extra. The R7+ was in an excellent position with (at high tide) some 50cm above the water and with free take off to Europe, US and Japan. I enjoyed another two days with nice operating conditions but finally had to prepare for my departure.

My plane to Fiji was scheduled for Thursday, 24 September at 12:30PM so there was plenty of time in the morning to take down the antenna and pack all the equipment. At 10AM I had to check-in at the airport after which I could go

back to the hotel and report back at the airport at around 12. It took only 1 minute walk from the hotel to the airport which is the shortest distance I have ever experienced!

When checking-in at the airport I was told that there was a delay and the plane had not left Fiji yet. But around 11:30AM we got the information that the flight was canceled. Here my room at the hotel proved to be a benefit as I was back at the hotel quickly and reclaimed my room. This was not a problem because without a plane, there are no new guests. Immediately I reinstalled the antenna and was on the air within 1.5 hours. Normally you would be disappointed if your flight is canceled but this time I welcomed such a cancellation!

The next morning I followed the same exercise as the day before and at 10AM I was at the airport again for the check-in. This time the flight was confirmed and my luggage was checked in without paying for excess luggage.



The antenna positioned right in the water in front of the hotel room. Absolutely a perfect location.



This picture shows clearly how small the atoll is at certain places.

Viti Levu, Fiji

September 25 – I arrived in Suva and had a connecting flight to Nadi but that was the schedule of the previous day. AirPacific had made arrangements to get their passengers to their final destination, but not for all. I was now scheduled to have a flight at 8 PM to Nadi but managed to get a connecting flight at 5 PM. Because I also arrived one day late at Club Fiji, they did not have my preferred room 10 available. I now got room 7 which was closer to the reception area and thus had more people crossing in front of my chalet. However, I could use the same location for the antenna.

After I spent my last hours of operating of this Pacific DXpedition, I packed the equipment for

the 7th time, but this time for the return trip home.

It was a wonderful experience to visit these small nations in the Pacific Ocean and experience the friendliness and hospitality of the people and relaxed atmosphere. I have enjoyed a fantastic DXpedition to a new destination. I hope this operation has given many of you a chance to contact one or more (new) countries and you enjoyed the pile ups as I did. I hope to meet you on one of my future trips.



The antenna box, suitcase and trolley that together with a bag pack made 45 KG.

Travel plan



QSO statistics

	T30GM		T2G		3D2GM		Total	
40m	1,382	24%	581	11%	1	0%	1,964	15%
30m	705	12%	853	16%	143	7%	1,701	13%
20m	1,802	31%	2,240	43%	1,038	52%	5,081	39%
17m	1,256	22%	970	18%	611	30%	2,837	22%
15m	413	7%	359	7%	211	11%	983	8%
12m	175	3%	241	5%		0%	416	3%
Total	5,733		5,244		2,004		12,981	
1-Band QSOs	2309		2573		1479			
2-Band QSOs	665		530		166			
3-Band QSOs	268		244		34			
4-Band QSOs	147		103		3			
5-Band QSOs	65		38					
6-Band QSOs	32		17					
	3486		3505		1682			

Fact sheet

Preparation time	4-6 months	
Total travel time	105 hrs	
Waiting/local transport	60 hrs	
Traveled distance	46,672 km	
Total weight of luggage	45 KG	
Number of cases	Suitcase, antenna box, trolley, bag pack	
Station setup/dismantling	7 times	
Setup time	2 hours	
Dismantling time	1.5 hours	
Personal weight loss	4 KG	
Illnesses	None	
Flight cancelations	1	
What went wrong	Missing hose clamp	
Luggage not used	Clamboo net, tuner	
Total QSO's	Approx. 13,000	
Activated bands	40-12 meters	
Mode	CW	
Radio	Elecraft K3	
Power	100 Watts	
Logging software	N1MM	
Antennas	ECO R7+, 40m elevated vertical	
Activation	3D2GM	Viti Levu, Fiji—OC016
	T30GM	Tarawa, Kiribati—OC017
	T2G	Funafuti, Tuvalu—OC015
Cost per QSO	€ 0.35	

I would like to conclude this story by thanking the following people for the help in providing valuable information for the preparation of my trip: N7OU, LA5UF, W7Yaq, JA8BMK and G3SXW.

I also wish to thank my sponsors INDEXA, GDXF and EUDXF and the numerous individual sponsors that made their donation via Paypal or included something extra with their QSL requests.



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QSL information

All requests via bureau of direct will be answered. Direct cards should have a SAE and sufficient return postage. IRC's are not preferred as they are very difficult to exchange via our post office. They may even be rejected starting 2010. So better use 2 USD or more for multiple cards (more than 3 return cards).

I do answer multiple request per envelope, also for all contacts made long ago.

